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ABSTRACT

Secondary school literature anthologies, like social studies texts, present a narrow, prejudiced view of the black experience in the United States, when and if it is presented at all. Until recently, the literature included in these anthologies failed to achieve the objective stated almost 30 years ago by the National Council of Teachers of English that literature instruction should help to develop a keen sense of permanent social values and failed to reflect the multicultural and multiethnic society in which Americans live. An examination of six secondary school literature anthologies published during the 1960's reveals great variance ranging from token integration to a truly interracial view of humanity. Only two anthologies, whose magazine appearance makes them attractive to reluctant readers, successfully project a black image in literature. Secondary school students must be provided with literature which enables them to mesh their social perceptions with their artistic understandings. (JM)

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APTER 7

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My Brother's Keeper: A View of Blacks in Secondary-School Literature Anthologies

John C. Carr

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introduction

Just as secondary-school social studies textbooks have either distorted the image of blacks in their presentation of history, the operation of government, and the way in which people live together, so have literature anthologies extended the narrow and prejudiced view of the black experience in the United States.

In the following chapter, John C. Carr considers the ways in which blacks are represented and presented in three "traditional" hard-cover anthologies and in three "new" soft-cover collections.

The differences between the oldest of the traditional series and the newest of the paper anthologies is both illuminating and disheartening, encouraging and frightening.

While social studies texts concern themselves largely with men as social beings striving to live and thrive in their environment, literature anthologies should offer a view of man's souls: their aspirations, their dreams, their fantasies, their expression of how it feels to be alive and thriving—or failing—in this "the greatest of all possible worlds." For the reason that literature and social studies complement one another in their impact on our reactions to people and ideas, and because the anthology is

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the most used literature resource in schools, it is necessary to examine what those textbooks suggest about the black image in the United States —past and present.

Art for art's sake versus art for social purpose is a subject of long-standing debate, argued everywhere from Aristotle's Greece to Mao's China. Given the diversity of men's minds, a resolution of the debate is not probable, as Aristotle knew and Chairman Mao and his "cultural guardians" have come to recognize.

Proponents of literature study for young people who would confine that study to literature for its own sake simply do not know the realities of contemporary schools or the nature of the adolescent in the latter part of the twentieth century. Proponents of literature study who would use it simply to extend the social sciences, or convert it to a guidance function, violate its very nature. Surely, given the growing complexity of human relationships in a technologically-oriented world and the consequent greater need for individuals to develop a personal sense of esthetics, there must be some middle ground which will allow teachers and young people some direction and confidence in developing a value system that sees the relevance of literature as a two-sided coin: "Telling it like it is and might be" and "telling it beautifully."

The prestigious National Council of Teachers of English determined almost thirty years ago that literature instruction should "develop a keen sense of permanent social values" and that literary study should not be regarded as a "storehouse unrelated to the problems with which the world grapples today."[1] If students are asked to believe that literature is a mirror of life, it is reasonable to expect that they will be exposed to examples of it which will enable them to see the variety of all human experience it reflects. Until recently, secondary-school literature anthologies in the United States not only failed to achieve the NCTE's objective regarding social values, but also failed to show in their mirrors of life the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society in which Americans live.

Just as social studies textbooks began to alter their stereotyped presentations of blacks by the middle of the sixties, so did literature anthologies. To compare the standard secondary-school literature collections of the late fifties and early sixties with the new paperback anthologies is to recognize that, quite literally, a whole new world has been discovered (or, more properly, uncovered).

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1. Basic Aims Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, "Basic Aims for English Instruction in American Schools," *The English Journal* 21 (January, 1942): 45. See also Herbert J. Muller, *The Uses of English* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1967), pp. 77-94.

The tradition of the textbook as the principle source of instructional material in secondary schools is so ingrained that the power of those books in influencing development is incalculable. And yet it is only in the last several years that young Americans, black or white, have had the opportunities to realize through literature texts that blacks have been literary artists as well as protagonists of literature—and in the process to further realize that black, like white, *is sometimes* beautiful.

In a study of thirty-seven anthology volumes, Dodds found that twenty of them did not have a single selection either by or about Negroes.[2] In another study, Sterling examined thirty-eight volumes, finding that twenty-seven of them "contained no material at all by or about American Negroes."[3] The volumes studied by Dodds and Sterling do not entirely overlap one another, just as the thirty-five volumes examined in this chapter do not entirely overlap those combined studies. Since anthologies are the most common literature resources used by secondary-school students,[4] the evidence accumulated by Dodds and Sterling, and reinforced here, is staggering and incontrovertible: most young people have been—are—exposed to a bland, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant view of literature.

While it is unfortunate, it is also accurate to observe that, in general, literature anthologies

> . . . imply a most dangerous falsehood: that over ten percent of [American] citizens do not exist.
>
> The people and problems that are front page news in almost every daily newspaper are completely left out of most English curricula. Textbooks are still subtly, but definitely, slanted toward white people's achievements, either by completely omitting any reference to Negroes or by presenting the few Negroes that are mentioned as caricatures or stereotypes.[5]

The exclusion or minimizing of blacks in literature anthologies is a double-edged sword: it makes possible the slow and devastating erosion

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2. Barbara Dodds, *Negro Literature for High School Students* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968), p. 3.
3. Dorothy Sterling, "What's Black and White and Read All Over?" *The English Journal* 57 (November 1968): 818.
4. James R. Squire and Roger R. Applebee, *High School English Instruction Today: The National Study of High School English Programs* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1968), p. 48. See also Fred I. Godshalk, *A Survey of the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1969), pp. 16-28.
5. Dodds, *Negro Literature for High School Students*, p. 3.

of self-image for black students, and it also makes possible a sure and limiting restriction on social and artistic depth for those in the majority. The consequences are awesome for a world in trauma.

the role of anthologies

Young people can be helped to develop a system of social values through literature by helping them to enlarge their own lives by better comprehension of others, by allowing them the chance to understand life among people of other cultures, by encouraging them to discern the truth and beauty of the past, and by exposing them to artistic quality. The extent to which anthologies themselves can serve in these capacities is debatable. The emphasis on brief material, the truncating of longer works, the stereotyped "classic" materials presented, the tradition of not offending regional, political, religious, and social groups tends to create a "don't-rock-the-boat" atmosphere. Frequently, the use of anthologies raises the question of whether anything is achieved except providing every student with a copy of materials which may be more difficult to obtain otherwise. (That all students are required to read the same materials and that they are required to read much of the material presented in most current anthologies is another—and alarming—subject.)

One hopes that the better anthologists realize the limitations of their collections, that they expect—even encourage—that the collections be supplemented. For too many students, though, anthologies represent the only material read. In other cases, supplementary simply means "more of the same."

It is certainly true that all literature does not "deal primarily with man as a social animal but with particular men as unique and many-faceted beings."[6] However, anthologies have long been organized around basic socializing themes: self-discovery, family and peer relationships, integrity and patriotism.[7] Although much literature is concerned with man's uniqueness, literature anthologies seem to say by their arrangement, "You are not alone. Look how we are all alike!" Until the recent past, however, literature anthologies, through their omissions and distor-

6. James J. Lynch and Bertrand Evans, *High School English Textbooks: A Critical Examination* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), pp. 154-55.

7. As Lynch and Evans suggest in their 1963 study, most literature anthologies are "overorganized." One often has the feeling that selections have been forced to fit a preconceived category.

tions, have said to black students: "You are alone. You are not like us at all!"

In studies by Lorang,[8] duCharms and Moeler,[9] and Child,[10] it has been shown that human values and behavior are effected by the literature one reads. Further evidence that individuals (and groups) are conscious of the value potentials of their reading and study is documented by recent and continuing demands that black history and literature be given their places in the curriculum. (Indeed, the history of literary censorship suggests that people have always believed that "reading maketh the full man.")

Aside from teacher direction, the chances a student has for developing values relating to blacks and whites through reading anthologies is directly related to his opportunity to see each reading experience in a context which clearly indicates that all people are appropriate subjects for artistic expression and are equally capable of making artistic comment.

Specifically, the ways in which anthologies create these opportunities are through choice of literary selections, use of illustrations, and editorial comment.

When literary selections are exclusively concerned with whites, as traditionally they have been, the reader begins to understand (if only through osmosis) that what is valued is a morality, a life style, and a view of beauty that is highly specialized and restrictive. The strong possibility exists that blacks come to see their own values undermined and undervalued. In light of the literature anthologies that have been used so long in the United States, is it not significant to consider their contributions to the present, violent repudiation of the image of "right, white, and good" that has been foisted upon black students.

In the six anthology series considered in this chapter, illustrations are an immediate index to the perceptions held by their editors regarding blacks in literature. When a black student progresses through an entire illustrated volume of American literary selections and nowhere finds

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8. M. Corde Lorang, Sr., *Burning Ice: The Moral and Emotional Effects of Reading* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968).
9. R. duCharms and G. H. Moeler, "Values Expressed in American Children's Readers," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 64 (1962): 136-42.
10. Irvin L. Child, et al., "Children's Textbooks and Personality Development: An Exploration in the Social Psychology of Education," *Psychological Monographs* 60 (1946): 1-53.

either a photograph or a drawing of a Negro, what is he to conclude? When blacks are encountered in poses of ignorance, possessing "quaint, odd charm," or engaged only in violence, what more insidious conclusions may he draw? What is the magnitude of the sin of omission when photographs appear of white authors but not of the few blacks represented in a volume?

Next only to the teacher's responsibility in helping students to make inferences, to see relationships, and to draw conclusions is that of the editorial commentary of anthologies. The raising of significant questions, the raising of provocative considerations, the supplying of enlightening background, as well as suggestions of possible interpretation are essential. If no considerations are raised, directly or indirectly, which involve black and interracial relationships, young people may well conclude that literature has no relevance to these issues; they may, thereby, fail to discover that much literature has not only beauty but wisdom to offer those in search of answers to perplexing human questions.

An examination of the extent to which six anthology series allow students opportunities to find social relevance as well as beauty reveals enormous variance ranging from "token integration" to a truly interracial view of mankind.

In the order of their advancing success in presenting an interracial view of life the series are:

Ginn Literature Series,[11] (least successful);

Themes and Writers Series;[12]

Mainstream Series;[13]

America Reads Series;[14]

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11. Ginn and Company, New York. *Introduction to Literature, The Study of Literature, Understanding Literature, Types of Literature, American Literature, English Literature* (all 1964), Edward S. Gordon, senior editor.
12. Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York: *Focus, Perceptions* (both 1969), *Insights, Encounters, American Literature, Western Literature* (all 1967), G. Robert Carlsen, general editor.
13. Charles E. Merrill Company, New York: *Courage Under Fire, Against the Odds* (both 1967), *They Were First, People Like You, In New Directions* (all three 1968), Charles G. Spiegler, editor.
14. Scott, Foresman and Company, Fair Lawn, N.J.: *Projection Through Literature, Counterpoint in Literature* (both 1967), *Outlooks Through Literature, Exploring Life Through Literature, The United States in Literature, England in Literature* (all four 1968).

Impact Series;[15]
Crossroads Series;[16] (most successful).

An examination of the first and last of these suggests that they are intended for young people living in totally different times and places—despite the fact that both are products of the sixties.

how not to do it

The Ginn Series seems best typified by the remark of a young teacher, who, after attempting to utilize three books of the set, observed, "The editors seem to be under the delusion that the last revolution in this country was the American Revolution. They don't seem to know that times and people have changed."

The Negro is dispatched with "Go Down, Moses" (and the observation that "the American Dream was movingly expressed in many Negro spirituals"), one poem each by Samuel Allen and Gwendolyn Brooks and an essay by James Baldwin, "The Creative Dilemma." For the uninitiated, Mr. Baldwin is identified only as one who ". . . grew up in *the Harlem section* of New York City" (italics added).[17]

Editorial comment in the Ginn Series does nothing to foster social understandings. The questions and commentary which accompany Samuel Allen's "To Satch" do not suggest that either Allen or Satchel Paige are black. The questions are typified by "Comment on the poet's use of colloquial language," "What impression of Satch does the poem give you?"[18] No mention is made of the discrimination which Paige met as one of the pioneers who desegregated American sports. A depth of understanding and appreciation is surely lost for the poem in the failure to suggest that Allen is writing in admiration of another black man who has triumphed in a hostile environment.

Following James Baldwin's essay in the American literature volume,[19] there are several questions which deal with Baldwin's ideas about

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15. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., New York: *I've Got a Name, At Your Own Risk, Cities, Larger Than Life* (all 1968), Charlotte K. Brooks, general editor.
16. Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., New York, N.Y.: *Playing It Cool, Breaking Loose, Tomorrow Won't Wait, Love's Blues, In Others' Eyes* (all 1969), *Me, Myself and I, He Who Dares, Dreamers of the Dream* (all 1970).
17. *American Literature*, p. 771.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 686.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 771-75.

the artist and society, but there is no suggestion of what Baldwin, in other places, has documented as the particular problems of the black artist. Such a suggestion is not possible in the questions, of course, because nowhere have we been told that Baldwin is black.

Supporting the generally mediocre, white, middle-class view of life that the text offers, the nondescript illustrations of the whole series further underscore a failure to see that the world is also inhabited by blacks.

The slick packaging of the *Themes and Writers* series deceives the eye. It takes a while to turn attention away from the pretty pictures (and for the most part that is what they are—reproductions of "romantic" and "neoclassic" paintings) to the staid, generally old-fashioned contents of the books themselves. Purporting to be humanities-oriented, the anthologies are, in fact, little more than traditional collections spruced up with "Galleries" of art work whose themes are essentially the same as the accompanying literature.

While society is recognized as more diverse in this series than it is in the Ginn books (and the literary selections better), the overall effect, especially in the ninth to twelfth grade volumes, is nonetheless limiting. Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Gwendolyn Brooks are the black Negro writers briefly included in these volumes. Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is excerpted; "Gallery" and individual illustrations show a handful of Negroes ("patients" and "helpers" of Albert Schweitzer, "Ruby Green Singing," "Ira Aldridge as Othello," and something vaguely seen and equally vaguely titled "Minority #1" and a photograph of "Helen Keller in Africa"). In the illustrations which accompany the beginning of a section called "The Human Condition" (in the last volume of the series),[20] portraits of five significant writers are shown, none of them black.

Curiously enough, the editors of *Themes and Writers* offer three divisions (again in the last volume) which seem ideally suited to presentation of minority views: "Critics of Society," "Conflict of Wills" and "Protests." Some of what we get is interesting enough (*Antigone*, Wilfred Owen, Gandhi, Alan Paton, Zola), but nowhere do we find criticism, conflict, or protest which American students can relate to immediately—and about which they have much knowledge and feeling. It is of more than passing interest that not one black is represented in these sections despite the fact that we find the observation, "Today's greatest conflicts are not with the elements, but between men and nations and within individual hearts and minds."[21]

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20. *Western Literature*, p. 314.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

The seventh and eighth grade anthologies (which bear a 1969 copyright) have a somewhat more interracial tone. In the seventh grade collection the reader finds selections by Gwendolyn Brooks (both poems and a story), Richard Wright, Langston Hughes (a poem and a biographical piece about Harriet Tubman). The illustrations of this volume show several blacks: Frederick Douglass, Jessie Owens, escaping slaves in a reproduction of a painting entitled "Canada Bound," details from four murals by Aaron Douglas (accompanied by the comment, "A history of the black man in America is a story of life against the odds"),[22] several black figures in a painting entitled "Billboards," two photos of Harriet Tubman, and a picture of black natives in a Winslow Homer painting "Watson and the Shark."

The eighth grade volume has fewer inclusions of blacks but still offers a more interracial view than the last four in the *Themes and Writers* series. Included are verses by Langston Hughes and Dubose Heyward and a "digested" version of *The Lilies of the Field*. In the latter there are five photographs of Sidney Poitier in scenes from the film, although he is not identified by name. A few photographs in the Gallery sections depict blacks.

The editors of the *Themes and Writers* series do not find it possible to present significant social problems or questions with the selections they include by blacks, simply because the subjects of black-written works are "safe" and preclude the introduction of such material.

The *Mainstream* series is one of a growing number of recent paperback anthologies designed for use with "underprivileged" students in urban settings. The series of five books is advertised as "designed for students whose experience and backgrounds have kept them out of the social and educational mainstream." While the series' intention is admirable, its success in blending social values and literature is less than felicitous. While black authors and characters are prominent in the series, what the reader frequently faces is undistinguished writing that depicts little more than an awareness of the fact that most people share the same personal struggles. The individual book titles (*Courage Under Fire, Against the Odds, They Were First, People Like You, In New Directions*) suggest the personal flavor of the selections included and at the same time seem to act as come-ons to the "underprivileged."

Primary emphasis is on self-awareness and self-image among blacks, Spanish-speaking Americans and indeterminate whites. The better selections are most often by Negroes: Lorraine Hansberry (an excerpt from *A Raisin in the Sun*), Gordon Parks, Langston Hughes and James

22. *Focus*, p. 334.

Baldwin. Among the works included are those which promote understanding of those struggling for self-awareness, people being depicted as being "like us." Selections of high interest and relevance are those by Sammy Davis, Jr., Floyd Patterson, and Lillian Smith.

The volume *They Were First* contains the most relevant and interesting selections of the entire series, particularly in the longest section "In the Fight for Human Rights and Dignity." Jackie Robinson, Mary McLeod Bethune and Martin Luther King are clearly heroes in this volume along with Susan B. Anthony, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy.

The illustrations in these short anthologies portray ordinary scenes in which blacks play an equal role with other ethnic groups. The books are intended to attract readers through the absence of questions and activities following the selections. (This is also true of the *Impact* and *Crossroads* series.) The stories and verses are briefly preceded by an introductory statement intended to supply motivation for reading as well as whatever background is necessary for comprehension. This seems an especially attractive feature for a series designed to attract "reluctant" or "disadvantaged" readers. However, the danger exists in all the paperback anthologies that the student operating on his own will not be led to consider anything more about the selections than what he is able to raise out of his own resources.

Ultimately, though, the *Mainstream* series emerges as cautious and somewhat paternalistic. The editors obviously do not intend to present selections which indicate social unrest, dissatisfaction, or protest. Readers are not led to foster doubts or pose questions beyond the "I am the Captain of my soul" rhetoric. A more positive contribution might have been made to value formation if some better material had been substituted for the many insipid and artificial stories deodorized of the qualities which make group differences unique and vital. The formation of literary values would certainly profit.

Most successful of the three hardback anthologies considered here are the *America Reads* collections which incisively capture a sense of the individual functioning in a multi-racial and multi-cultural world.

In the first four books of the series, there is an admirable range of black authors including Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Samuel Allen, Langston Hughes and Gordon Parks, as well as authors and stories representing many other Western and non-Western cultures. Only in this particular hardbound series does a Negro (Harriet Tubman) emerge in heroic proportions. This series is also the only one of the six examined which finds George Washington Carver suitable as a biographical subject.

The *United States in Literature* volume in the *America Reads Series* curiously fails to maintain the social awareness of the preceding volumes; nevertheless it offers works by James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen and Gwendolyn Brooks as well as a selection of Negro spirituals. The collection also contains two excellent and straightforward verses by Robert Hayden: "Runagate Runagate," which deals with the escape of Negro slaves via the Underground Railroad, and "Frederick Douglass," which offers a moving tribute to the black leader. This volume is notable, also, for presenting the Southern view of the Civil War (an excerpt from Freeman's *Robert E. Lee*, verses by Confederate poets, and "Robert E. Lee" from Benet's *John Brown's Body*).

An inadequacy of the series, with the exception of the Hayden poems, is its failure to pose questions which might provoke thinking about minority problems. The questions raised for Langston Hughes' "Dreams" is typical. Instead of raising the question "What kind of dreams do you think the poet is talking about?,"[23] more direct, socially significant questions might well have centered around the theme of the poem ("hold fast to dreams") and survival aspects for blacks. Gordon Parks' "Music in My Head"[24] has an accompanying "portfolio" of Parks' photographs which offers another example of restricted thinking. The text comments, "Beginning as a fashion photographer, he soon became more interested in picturing the poverty stricken areas of his own and other countries," but in only one of the five photographs is there an indication of Parks' concern with poverty.

Perhaps most disappointing of all is the handling of Countee Cullen's "Any Human to Another."[25] While the editorial commentary provides background on Cullen's life, and while the poem cries out for an interpretation that includes the black-white experience, no indication of such interpretations is made. John Donne's "No man is an island" observation is quoted and students are encouraged to "relate the ideas expressed by John Donne to the theme . . .," but that is all. A marvelous opportunity for ethnic and cultural understanding is ignored.

Illustrations in all six volumes of this series are excellent. The drawings involve the imagination; the photographs are relevant and the photographic portraits of authors, not very helpful in most series, are enlightening because the reader is confronted with the reality of artists who are sometimes also black.

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23. *Counterpoint in Literature*, p. 272.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 340-43.
25. *The United States in Literature*, p. 589.

some promising trends: two series

The *Impact* collections are attractive from the standpoint of graphic design and, thus, instantly inviting. Through an abundant use of black and white photographs and drawings, the books convey an immediate sense of the ethnic dignity and social participation of blacks in American society. While the *Impact* series occasionally suffers some of the same sentimental inadequacies as the *Mainstream* books, the selections present a better melding of literature and social awareness. Dick Gregory is prominent among the Negro authors who appear only here and in the *Crossroads* series.

Particularly interesting selections are Richard Wright's "The Fight" and Peter Quinn's "Challenged" which reveal a black and white view of survival in the city; an excerpt from James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain;* and the lyrics for Joe Darion's popular song "The Impossible Dream."

While the use of "pictorial essays," "Peanuts" comic strips and magazine-technique layout consumes space which might be given to more prose and poetry, these devices are so attractive and relevant that they undoubtedly involve "reluctant readers" in selections they would ordinarily ignore—and in themselves raise many possibilities for discussion and writing related to literature.

Another attractive aspect of the series, as with the *Mainstream* and *Crossroads* books, is the fact that stories and poems carry no questions or activities with them. Throughout there is a prevailing sense of involvement, pleasure and enjoyment.

The *Crossroads* series, only eight volumes of which were published at the time of this writing, is even more effective than the *Impact* series because of its better literary selections and because its graphic design more honestly and interestingly depicts blacks in the United States.

The series is projected to include many additional volumes, recordings, a student activity book, a classroom library of selected paperback books, as well as teachers' manuals for the entire series. Its potential for student involvement in the questions of both literature and social purpose far outweighs that of any of the other five anthology series.

The emphasis of the books is on "being with it." The selections are particularly excitement- and adventure-oriented and the photographs and drawings futher that intention, as well as make comment on their own.

Titles of the books are themselves interesting: *Playing It Cool; Tomorrow Won't Wait; Love's Blues; Breaking Loose; Me, Myself and I; He Who Dares, Dreamers of Dreams; In Others' Eyes.* Selections are usually brief and provocative. Authors included are Dick Gregory, Martin

Luther King, Gwendolyn Brooks, Claude Brown, Langston Hughes (sixteen selections), William Melvin Kelley, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Countee Cullen, Gordon Parks, and a host of other lesser known black writers, one a high school student.

The black selections range widely: *Nigger* (Gregory), *Manchild in the Promised Land* (Brown), "We Real Cool" (Brooks), "Ballad of the Landlord" (Hughes), and "Gratitude: A Nupe Folk Tale," which ends, interestingly enough, "There comes a time for every man when he is treated as he has treated others."

Other especially interesting selections are Jimmy Breslin's "Selma Leaders," Kelley's "Connie," Jimmie Sherman's verse "Negro History," Martin J. Hamer's "The Mountain," and Kelley's "Cry For Me."

The outstanding graphics and layout of the series clearly depicts an interracial society. Some stunning photographs include one of a black man passing under a church sign stating "Love Thy Neighbor," another of a black man exiting from a "Whites only" restroom, a black protester wearing a sign saying "I *am* a man," black Olympics athletes giving the black power salute, a store front on which hangs a sign reading "Negro stay out," and numerous photographs realistically showing blacks in all walks of life. Relationships between the written selections and the illustrations are carefully conceived and the possibility for discussion and writing are vast.

In some cases, *Crossroads* blends photographs of blacks with materials written about whites, suggesting, thereby, that the experience depicted in the selection is a universal one; this is especially well done with "Graves" by Carl Sandburg (one of the graves depicted being that of Martin Luther King), and "A Mystery of Heroism" by Stephen Crane. Also of note are the photographs accompanying Hughes' conversational verse "Madam and the Rent Man," showing both characters of the poem as black.

A special mature and humane quality pervades the *Crossroads* series. Nowhere else can one find anthology editors willing to end a volume depicting (through selections and illustrations) blacks struggling for survival by using Dorothy Parker's tart verse on the futility of suicide ("Résumé"), the last line of which is "You might as well live."

No where else can one find a literature anthology making such an honest and qualitative effort to depict an interracial society while at the same time reserving enough sense of humor to print a photograph of a white boy eating a watermelon.

The *Mainstream*, *Impact* and *Crossroads* series are all attractive because of their compact sizes; they have avoided the overstuffed appear-

ance of typical anthologies and are easy to handle. The *Impact* and *Crossroads* volumes have a pronounced magazine appearance which teachers who have used them report is especially attractive to "reluctant readers."

A shortcoming in all the paperback series, however, is that they present chapters (or adaptations of chapters) from full-length works without indicating in the anthology proper that the selections are excerpted from longer works or that the works have been altered. When a student reads one of these selections, he has no immediate evidence that he has not experienced the whole or real thing.

Considering their specialized goals and their intention of capturing "reluctant readers," both series may be more successful than anthologies with "loftier" goals and more stilted approaches. While all three are designed primarily for city schools, their use would do much to enlighten what Miel and Kiester call "the shortchanged children of suburbia"[26] as well as rural youngsters.

are anthologies the answer?

Except for the uniqueness of *Impact* and *Crossroads* which enable them to successfully project a black image in literature, one is left with many questions about anthology editors and their sense of literature as an expression of and about blacks. Why are such black spokesmen as Eldridge Cleaver and Malcolm X omitted? Why is Martin Luther King, Jr. represented in only two of the thirty-five volumes examined, and Ralph Ellison only in one? How is it that James Baldwin, Richard Wright and Claude McKay, and W. E. B. DuBois are all but ignored? Why is there not more publication of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*? Where is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Where is Carson McCuller's *The Member of the Wedding* and Edward Albee's *The Death of Bessie Smith*? Where are the black playwrights LeRoi Jones and Ossie Davis?

Are the limitations and omissions of anthologies the result of ignorance, fear, malice? On whose part: editors and publishers, school systems and teachers? All? Wherever the fault does lie, there is at least one sure place where the fault may begin to be corrected—with teachers themselves. The secondary-school teacher has emerged in the last decade as an individual prepared to defend his right to earn a decent living and to protect his working conditions. It is time for him to leave his cocoon

26. Alice Miel and Edwin Kiester, Jr., *The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia* (New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1967).

entirely, establishing his professional competency and asserting his right to academic freedom. English teachers might well make their own beginning by reconsidering the approach to literature teaching. Are anthologies capable of meeting the needs of the new breed of American youth? If they are, then what changes are necessary in them to do the job? And in what ways must teachers learn to use them to complete advantage?

Evans and Walker have pointed out that ". . . seldom does a teacher disregard the grouping he finds in anthologies in favor of his own . . . there is no doubt that the types of organization a teacher finds in the anthology he is given to teach is the most significant factor in determining how the course will be organized."[27] To this add that teachers have not so far shown any great effort to supplement anthologies with other literature materials.[28] One concludes that what is happening in literature study is dependent on the anthologies available.

Editors and publishers of literature anthologies prepare materials for something other than entirely altruistic reasons. There *is* money involved. Evans and Walker indicate that as "Teachers order books, . . . they influence what publishers make available for them to order."[29] As long as teachers accept and use anthologies which are ineffective, so long, also, will those books continue to be published. Textbooks *are* commodities. We do not hestitate to reject inferior products in other areas of our living; why should we not be considerably more discriminating in such a penultimately significant area as learning materials?

summary

August Strindberg observed that those who encounter a work of art must be collaborators with the artist by remolding art out of their own experience. If secondary-school students are to become artistic collaborators, they must learn to mesh their social perceptions with their artistic understandings so that the experience of life and art are deeper and richer.

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27. William H. Evans and Jerry L. Walker, *New Trends in the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966), p. 44.
28. See Squire and Applebee, *High School English Instruction Today . . .*; also see Godshalk, *A Survey of the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools*.
29. Evans and Walker, *New Trends in the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools*, p. 44.

If students have a limited experience which allows limited collaboration, it is the responsibility of those who teach—either through the act itself or by assembling materials for teaching—to confront students with those social realities which enable them to see life as it is and has to be lived within the confinements of our ethnic and cultural structures. Collaboration demands mutual understanding as well as participation and a sense of artistic integrity. Collaboration cannot occur when participants are encouraged to be ignorant, condescending, provincial, cautious, reactionary, or racist.

Literature anthologies which purport to offer a view of life and literature that is in any way accurate must present evidence that blacks as well as whites have lived, struggled and survived and are still alive and grappling with the immense problems of the twentieth century.

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